

## Conquer Your Exercise Excuses

You're too busy. It's raining. You need to make dinner. You need to help your children with their homework. You just don't feel like it.

"Our research shows that people who exercise somewhat regularly have more excuses for not doing so than those who don't exercise at all," says Bonnie Berger, Ph.D., professor and director of the School of Human Movement, Sport and Leisure Studies at Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio. "It's those who exercise every now and then, those who feel like they really need to be doing it more, who are the excuse makers."

To help yourself get moving, address that inner voice that lets you off the exercise hook. Here, we discredit three of the common reasons you may tell yourself you can't fit in exercise as often as you'd like -- and what you can do to take a step in the right direction.

### "I don't have time"

By far, one of the most common excuses for not exercising is "I'm too busy." To that, you should ask yourself: Do I not have time to exercise, or am I simply not making time?

Consider: Americans, on average, watch three or four hours of television a day. "Surely we can find a half-hour among those three or four hours to exercise," Dr. Berger says.

Also, if you stay physically fit, no matter how hectic your schedule, you can feel like you have more time.

"You have more energy and your thoughts tend to be clearer because you've taken a mental break," says Dr. Berger, both of which can make you more productive and efficient at work and at home.

To parents who say they can't exercise because they have young children to attend to, she suggests squeezing in exercise time at the end of the day between work and home.

"The health benefits of exercising increase if you exercise for more than 30 minutes a day," says Dr. Berger. "Three 10-minute walks throughout the day go a long way toward keeping your heart healthy, reducing your blood pressure and improving your cholesterol levels. Everybody has time for that."

### "I'm just too tired"

After a long day, it's tough to argue with the fact you may be too tired to feel like exercising. But if you work out anyway, or even just go for a walk, you're likely to experience a noticeable energy boost because exercise sends blood sugar to muscles.

The same holds true if you tend to be a before-work exerciser. Once you get moving, you feel more alert and energetic, which can carry on throughout your day.

### "The weather is bad"

If you like to exercise outdoors, you can always blame the weather for not being able to work out. Unless it's a perfect day, there's bound to be some condition -- wind, rain, cold, heat, humidity -- that throws a wrench in your plan.

The answer is to have a backup plan for a stormy day, such as a workout video or a gym membership.

Overall, Dr. Berger suggests focusing on finding a fitness routine that works for you, whether it be working out with an exercise buddy or by yourself, in the morning or after work.

"Try to establish habits that feel good and fit into your life," she says. "If you do that, after a while exercise becomes more of a want rather than a should, which is the most powerful excuse-buster of all."

From the publication: *Flip the Switch: Lose the Excuses, Lose the Weight, and Get the Body You've Always Wanted*, by Jim Karas Foundations of Exercise Psychology, co-authored by Bonnie Berger, Ph.D. *Vitality* magazine/June 2005

Published: 11/19/2005

Last reviewed: 11/19/2005

For more information, visit [StayWell Online](#)